

Biden says he stands 'squarely behind' Afghanistan decision

By ZEKE MILLER, JONATHAN LEMIRE and DARLENE SUPERVILLE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Striking a defiant tone, President Joe Biden said Monday that he stands "squarely behind" his decision to withdraw U.S. forces from Afghanistan as he acknowledged the "gut-wrenching" images coming out of the country after the swift Taliban takeover of the government.

Biden said he had to choose between sticking to a previously negotiated agreement to withdraw U.S. troops this year or sending thousands more service members back into Afghanistan to fight a "third decade" of war.

Biden, sounding resolute in the face of withering criti-

cism of his handling of the situation, said he chose the latter so as not to repeat past mistakes. He reiterated that he had no regrets. "I stand squarely behind my decision," the president told the nation in a televised address from the White House East Room after he flew back from the Camp David presidential retreat. "After 20 years, I've learned the hard way that there was never a good time to withdraw U.S. forces." Many disagree with Biden's decision, angered by the chaos the world witnessed over the weekend as the Taliban ultimately captured Kabul, the capital, and Afghanistan's president left the country.

Continued on next page




President Joe Biden speaks about Afghanistan from the East Room of the White House, Monday, Aug. 16, 2021, in Washington.

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In this photo provided by the Ministry of Defence on Sunday, Aug. 15, 2021, members of the 16 Air Assault Brigade arrive in Kabul as part of a 600-strong UK-force sent to assist with Operation PITTING to rescue British nationals in Afghanistan amidst the worsening security situation there.

Continued from Front

Biden said he'd rather take the criticism over the fallout than pass the decision of how and when to withdraw to a fifth U.S. president. He said the decision to leave Afghanistan is "the right one for America" because keeping a U.S. presence there was no longer a U.S. national security interest. Biden described the images coming out of Afghanistan — especially at the airport in Kabul, where Afghans descended in hopes of fleeing the country — as "gut-wrenching." Video of Afghans clinging to a U.S. Air Force plane and running alongside it as prepared to take off had circulated widely on the internet. But he did not admit any U.S. fault in how the draw-down was executed. And after batting away the notion of a rapid Taliban

takeover when questioned a little over a month ago, Biden acknowledged Monday that "the truth is this did unfold more quickly than we had anticipated." He pledged that the U.S. will continue to support the Afghan people, push for regional diplomacy and speak out for the rights of Afghans. Senior U.S. military officials said the chaos at the airport in Kabul left seven people dead Monday, including some who fell from a departing American military transport jet. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss ongoing operations. Afghans rushed onto the tarmac as thousands tried to escape after the Taliban seized power. Some clung to the side of a U.S. military

plane before takeoff, in a widely shared video that captured the desperation as America's 20-year war comes to a chaotic end. Another video showed the Afghans falling as the plane gained altitude over Kabul. U.S. troops resorted to firing warning shots and using helicopters to clear a path for transport aircraft. The Pentagon confirmed Monday that U.S. forces shot and killed two individuals it said were armed, as Biden ordered another battalion of troops — about 1,000 — to secure the airfield, which was closed to arrivals and departures for hours Monday because of civilians on the runway. The speed of the Afghan government's collapse and the ensuing chaos posed the most serious test yet of Biden as commander in chief, and he came under

intense criticism from Republicans who said he had failed. Yet the president said the rapid end of the Afghan government only vindicated his decision, noting how the Afghan army surrendered to the Taliban. "American troops cannot and should not be fighting the war, and dying in a war that Afghan forces are not willing to fight for themselves," Biden said. Biden, who is viewed as an experienced foreign policy hand dating to his decades-long career in the Senate, including as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, expressed confidence in his decision and said he was prepared to take the heat. He said he was "deeply saddened by the facts we now face, but I do not regret my decision." Biden is the fourth U.S. presi-

dent to confront challenges in Afghanistan and had insisted he wouldn't hand America's longest war to his successor. But he is under pressure to explain how security in Afghanistan unraveled so quickly, especially since he and others in the administration had insisted it wouldn't happen.

"The jury is still out, but the likelihood there's going to be the Taliban overrunning everything and owning the whole country is highly unlikely," Biden said on July 8. Just last week, though, administration officials warned privately that the military was crumbling, prompting Biden on Thursday to order thousands of American troops into the region to speed up evacuation plans. Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump also yearned to leave Afghanistan, but ultimately stood down in the face of resistance from military leaders and other political concerns. Biden, on the other hand, has been steadfast in his refusal to change the Aug. 31 deadline, in part because of his belief that the American public is on his side.

A late July ABC News/Ipsos poll, for instance, showed 55% of Americans approving of Biden's handling of the troop withdrawal. Most Republicans have not pushed Biden to keep troops in Afghanistan over the long term and they also supported Trump's own push to exit the country. Still, some in the GOP stepped up their critique of Biden's withdrawal strategy and said images from Sunday of American helicopters circling the U.S. Embassy in Kabul evoked the humiliating departure of U.S. personnel from Vietnam. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell deemed the scenes of withdrawal as "the embarrassment of a superpower laid low." □

Associated Press

Food stamp benefits to increase by more than 25% in October

By ASHRAF KHALIL and JOSH BOAK

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's administration has approved a significant and permanent increase in the levels of food aid available to needy families — the largest single increase in the program's history.

Starting in October, average benefits for food stamps — officially known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP — will rise more than 25 percent above pre-pandemic levels. The increased assistance will be available indefinitely to all 42 million SNAP beneficiaries.

The increase coincides with the end of a 15 percent boost in SNAP benefits that was ordered as a pandemic protection measure. That benefit expires at the end of September.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said that with the change, the U.S. "will do a better job of providing healthy food for low-income families."

The aid boost is being packaged a major revision to the USDA's Thrifty Food Plan, which estimates the cost to purchase groceries for a family of four and guides the way the govern-



In this Jan. 12, 2015 file photo, a supermarket displays stickers indicating they accept food stamps in West New York, N.J.

Associated Press

ment calculates benefits. In practical terms, the average monthly per-person benefits for qualified recipients will rise from \$121 to \$157.

The increase is projected to cost an additional \$20 billion per year, but it won't have to be approved by Congress. A farm law passed in 2018 by the then-GOP led Congress and signed by former President Donald Trump already directed the department to reassess the Thrifty Food

Plan.

"Whether you're a Republican or a Democrat, I think there's a shared understanding of the importance of this program," Vilsack said in a conference call with reporters.

The increase is part of a multi-pronged Biden administration effort to strengthen the country's social safety net. Poverty and food security activists maintain that longstanding inadequacies were laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic,

presenting an opportunity to make generational improvements that reach beyond the current public health crisis.

Activists say the previous levels of pre-pandemic SNAP assistance simply weren't enough, forcing many households to choose cheaper, less nutritious options or simply go hungry as the funds ran low toward the end of the month.

Vilsack said the increased funding will allow families to

"be able to make healthy choices" all month long.

The move was swiftly praised by food security and anti-poverty activists.

Joel Berg, CEO of Hunger Free America, called it "a huge victory in the fight against hunger and for the tens of millions of Americans facing food insecurity."

The measure also drew praise from some Republicans.

"It will allow families to purchase nutritious foods, which is important to promote health and reduce diet-related chronic conditions," said Ann Veneman, who served as agriculture secretary under former President George W. Bush, in a statement on behalf of the Bipartisan Policy Council.

The changes are not directly connected to the COVID-19 pandemic, but Vilsack said the crisis helped underscore the importance of the food assistance program.

"A lot of people who thought they'd never take part in the SNAP program found themselves in need," he said. "The pandemic sort of shocked people out of the belief that this was a program for someone else." □

After delays, construction on Obama Center begins in Chicago

By SOPHIA TAREEN

Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Five years after Barack Obama chose Chicago as the site for his legacy project, construction officially began Monday on the Obama Presidential Center.

Roadway closures were set up and a bulldozer pulled up to start digging up part of the 19-acre lakefront site in Jackson Park, which is near the Obama family home and the University of Chicago where the former president once taught law. The Obama Foundation, which announced preliminary work in April, said a formal groundbreaking ceremony would take place in the fall.

Progress on the \$500 million

center has been delayed by lawsuits and a federal review required because of the location of the park, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Also, concerns about displacing Black residents stretched into a yearslong battle, resulting in neighborhood protections — including for affordable housing.

"We are incredibly proud to build the Obama Presidential Center here, just a couple of miles away from where President and Mrs. Obama started their journey," Valerie Jarrett, president of the Obama Foundation, said in a statement. "We are on the heels of the work of so many whose efforts made the election

of our first Black president possible. We look forward to delivering on the commitments we've made to our neighbors and our fellow Chicagoans as we continue on our road to groundbreaking."

The multi-building complex will include a museum, public library branch, athletic center, children's play area and a test kitchen. Obama's documents will be available in digital form. During a Chicago appearance in June, Obama said he hoped the center would help promote the city's South Side and bring Chicagoans together.

"Our goal has been, how do we create an institution that not only is helping to promote the sort of civic



Construction crews tear up the turf field and track in Jackson Park starting construction on The Barack Obama Presidential Center in Chicago on Monday, Aug. 16, 2021.

Associated Press

engagement and progressive change that I believe happens when ordinary people just get involved in their communities," he said. "But also how can we

make this into something that helps bring Chicago together at a time when Chicago like much of the country sometimes feels divided." □

Cardinal hospitalized with COVID, breathing with ventilator

By **TODD RICHMOND**

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Cardinal Raymond Burke, one of the Catholic Church's most outspoken conservatives and a vaccine skeptic, said he has COVID-19 and his staff said he is breathing through a ventilator.

Burke tweeted Aug. 10 that he had caught the virus, was resting comfortably and was receiving excellent medical care.

"Please pray for me as I begin my recovery," the 73-year-old Burke said in the tweet. "Let us trust in Divine Providence. God bless you."

On Saturday, his staff tweeted that he has been hospitalized and is on a ventilator, but that doctors were encouraged with his progress.

"(His Eminence) faithfully prayed the Rosary for those suffering from the virus ... Let us now pray the Rosary for him," his staff said.

The Washington Post and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Burke became infected during a visit to Wisconsin and was hospitalized there. Burke



In this Sept. 6, 2018 file photo, Cardinal Raymond Burke applauds during a press conference at the Italian Senate, in Rome. In this Sept. 6, 2018 file photo, Cardinal Raymond Burke applauds during a press conference at the Italian Senate, in Rome.

Associated Press

was born in Richland Center in southwestern Wisconsin and served as bishop in the Diocese of La Crosse from 1995 to 2004.

COVID-19 cases have been surging in Wisconsin in recent weeks due largely to the delta variant. The

state's seven-day case average stood at 1,139 as of Wednesday, the highest it's been since February.

The Diocese of La Crosse referred questions Monday about Burke's location and condition to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe,

a shrine Burke founded in the city. A message left there wasn't immediately returned. A spokesman for the Wisconsin Hospital Association said he had no information on Burke. Vatican media officials didn't immediately respond to an

email.

Burke holds a doctorate in canon law. He moved from the Diocese of La Crosse to become archbishop of St. Louis. He spent more than four years in that position, leaving in August 2008 to oversee the Vatican's supreme court. He was the first American to hold that position.

Burke has built a reputation as an outspoken conservative. He drew attention in the U.S. in 2004 when he said he would deny Holy Communion to the Democratic presidential nominee, John Kerry, a Roman Catholic who supports abortion rights.

Pope Francis reassigned Burke from the Vatican court in 2014 after he said the church was like a ship with no rudder.

Burke has since become one of Francis' fiercest critics, first by joining three other conservative cardinals in formally asking Francis in 2016 to explain himself after he opened the door to letting civilly remarried Catholics receive Holy Communion. □

Wind forecasts bring new worries to California fire lines



Wind blows the smoke away for a moment, revealing the damage from the Parleys Canyon Fire, Saturday, Aug. 14, 2021, in Utah. Wind blows the smoke away for a moment, revealing the damage from the Parleys Canyon Fire, Saturday, Aug. 14, 2021, in Utah.

Associated Press

QUINCY, Calif. (AP) — Firefighters battling flames in Northern California forests girded Monday for new bouts of windy weather, and a utility warned thousands of customers it might cut their electricity to prevent new fires from ignit-

ing if gusts damage power lines.

Conditions that suppressed the huge Dixie Fire overnight were expected to give way late in the day to winds that could push flames toward mountain communities in a region

where drought and summer heat have turned vegetation to tinder.

"In this environment any type of wind, no matter what direction — especially the way the fire's been going — is a concern for everyone," said information officer Jim Evans.

Growing explosively at times, the Dixie Fire has scorched 890 square miles (2,305 square kilometers) in the northern Sierra Nevada and southern Cascades since it ignited on July 13 and eventually merged with a smaller blaze called the Fly Fire.

Ongoing damage surveys have counted more than 1,100 buildings destroyed, including 625 homes, and more than 14,000 structures remained threatened. Numerous evacuation orders were in effect.

Investigations are continuing, but Pacific Gas & Elec-

tric has notified utility regulators that the Dixie and Fly fires may have been caused by trees falling into its power lines. The Dixie Fire began near the town of Paradise, which was devastated by a 2018 wildfire ignited by PG&E equipment during strong winds. Eighty-five people died.

On Sunday evening, PG&E notified 39,000 customers in parts of 16 Northern California counties that it may have to shut off power Tuesday evening due to a forecast of dry winds out of the northeast.

"Given this wind event and current conditions including extreme to exceptional drought and extremely dry vegetation, PG&E has begun sending 48-hour advance notifications to customers in targeted areas where PG&E may need to proactively turn power off for safety to reduce the risk

of wildfire from energized power lines," a statement said.

The Dixie Fire was among 97 large, active wildfires burning in the United States on Monday, the National Interagency Fire Center said. More than 25,000 firefighters, support personnel and management teams were assigned to the blazes.

The U.S. Forest Service said last week that it is operating in crisis mode, with more than double the number of firefighters deployed than at the same time a year ago.

The fires were also taking a toll on wildlife.

Near Taylorsville, California, some firefighters on Sunday were monitoring a bear cub who was possibly orphaned in the Dixie Fire. The emaciated cub was awaiting extraction from the fire-scarred area by a wildlife rescue team. □

Europe urges unity on Taliban but is quiet on failed mission

By SYLVIA HUI and LORNE COOK

LONDON (AP) — European leaders said Monday they will press for a unified international approach to dealing with a Taliban government in Afghanistan, as they looked on with dismay at the rapid collapse of two decades of a U.S.-led Western campaign in the country.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to French President Emmanuel Macron Monday, stressing the need for a common stand, both on recognizing any future Afghan government and to prevent a humanitarian and refugee crisis.

Both leaders agreed to cooperate at the U.N. Security Council, and Johnson also said he will host a virtual meeting of the Group of Seven leaders on Afghanistan in the next few days. Johnson said on Sunday, "We don't want anybody to bilaterally recognize the Taliban."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman echoed that sentiment Monday, saying the question of whether there can be a dialogue with the Taliban needs to be discussed internationally.

"We do not have any illusions about the Taliban and the essence of their movement," said Steffen Seibert, the spokesman.

But U.K. and European leaders have so far not spoken forcefully on Afghanistan, and their hands are tied in many ways: They have little leverage over the Taliban, and they are deeply reluctant to publicly criticize the withdrawal decision by the United States, their powerful NATO ally or comment on their own role in the failed intervention.

NATO countries were left with little choice but to pull out the roughly 7,000 non-American forces in Afghanistan after President Joe Biden announced in April that he was ending the U.S. involvement in the war by September, 20 years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Malcolm Chalmers, deputy director-general of London's Royal United Services



In this photo provided by the French Defense Ministry, French soldiers prepare to board a military Airbus A400M to evacuate French citizens from Afghanistan, Monday, Aug.16, 2021 in Orleans, central France.

Associated Press

Institute, said that Britain — which for much of the war contributed the second-largest number of troops to the mission — "was especially upset that the Biden administration didn't consult it more fully about the decision to withdraw this summer."

"That is water under the bridge, but the fact that there wasn't a coordinated alliance approach to the withdrawal makes it even more important now to coordinate a Western response starting with the question of recognition" of a Taliban government, he said.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said last week that the Taliban "need to understand that they will not be recognized by the international community if they take the country by force."

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has also warned that the militant group would face "isolation" and "lack of international support."

Borrell is expected to chair an emergency meeting of EU foreign ministers to discuss Afghanistan on Tuesday, while NATO envoys will also hold talks.

Meanwhile, Russia's envoy on Afghanistan said that Moscow will decide whether to recognize the new Taliban government based on its conduct.

Chalmers said "Western influence on the Taliban is very limited" compared with that of Pakistan, Iran and China. And Kurt Volker, former U.S. ambassador to NATO, said that warning the Taliban that they face international isolation is a threat "unmoored from reality."

"It is part of the Taliban's ideology to reject modernism and the international community and the reputation won by forcing the U.S. to leave is worth far more than aid budgets," he wrote for the Center for European Policy Analysis think tank.

"Indeed, having earned a reputation for abandoning

its mission, its friends, and its allies, it is the United States that may actually feel more isolated," Volker added.

The U.K. has repeatedly alluded to how it had been put in a "very difficult position" to continue the mission once the United States announced its decision to pull out, and British leaders have spoken with a tone of resignation as the situation deteriorated rapidly after NATO's exit.

"I think it's fair to say that the U.S. decision to pull out has accelerated things, but this has been in many ways something that has been a chronicle of an event foretold," Johnson said Sunday. Other European allies have made veiled criticisms of NATO's most powerful member country.

Asked Monday whether France and the U.S. were responsible for the collapse of the armed forces and the unfolding humanitarian crisis, Defense Minister Florence Parly said "France hasn't been in Afghanistan since 2014. There's no par-

allel to make with the U.S. involvement."

Briefing reporters last week about the crisis in Afghanistan, a senior EU official said that "the decisions which were made in this respect were made in NATO." He did not single out the alliance's most influential member, but the criticism was implicit.

Italian far-right leader Giorgia Meloni was much more direct, saying: "Let's give a welcome back to the cynical Obama-Clinton-Biden doctrine: 'If you can't win, create chaos.'"

Western governments have also appeared to be caught off guard by the stunning speed of the Taliban's advance on Kabul.

For months, European ambassadors at NATO and the EU have been unable to answer questions from reporters about what security arrangements might be in place in Afghanistan should the situation deteriorate.

Questions about how to protect embassies and the Kabul airport, where chaos reigned Monday as scores sought to flee the country, were never unanswered.

In the past few days, U.S., British and other Western governments have scrambled to evacuate their embassies, their citizens and Afghans who have helped with their military mission as the Taliban seized power.

"All of us, the government, the intelligence services, the international community, all of us misjudged the situation," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas admitted Monday. "Neither we nor our partners and experts did foresee the speed with which the Afghan security forces withdrew and capitulated."

British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace choked up during an interview as he expressed deep regret that some of those people will be left behind.

"It's sad and the West has done what it's done," he acknowledged.

"We have to do our very best to get people out and stand by our obligations and 20 years of sacrifice. ... It is what it is." □

'A new day': Opposition leader elected president in Zambia

By FARAI MUTSAKA

Associated Press

LUSAKA, Zambia (AP) —

Zambia's veteran opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema has won the southern African country's presidency with more than 50% of the vote.

Hichilema was declared president-elect early Monday after getting more than 2.8 million votes to President Edgar Lungu's 1.8 million votes, achieving one of the biggest electoral wins in Zambia's history. President Edgar Lungu, 64, accepted defeat and said he would work for a "peaceful transfer of power."

Hichilema welcomed Lungu's concession but described the outgoing government as a "brutal regime." Hichilema had been arrested multiple times and spent some time in jail on treason charges under Lungu's government, but he said he would not seek vengeance or retribution.

Preaching unity in Zambia, a country of 18 million people with several political and ethnic divisions, Hichilema urged an end to all political violence in which several people died in the run-up to the elections.

"It is indeed a new day. Change is here," said Hi-



Zambian President elect Hakainde Hichilema addresses a press conference at his residence in Lusaka, Zambia, Monday, Aug. 16, 2021.

Associated Press

chilema on Monday. "Let's put the past behind us. We are not going into office to arrest those who arrested us ... to replace those that have been very violent against our people only to start a new wave of violence."

Hichilema, a 59-year old businessman contesting the presidency for the sixth time, promised democratic reforms, investor-friendly economic policies, better debt management as well as "zero tolerance" to corruption.

Hichilema garnered more

than half of the nearly 5 million votes cast to win the presidency outright, without having to go to a runoff election.

About 80% of the country's registered voters cast their ballots.

Hichilema will become Zambia's seventh president since the reintroduction of multi-party democracy in 1991 by founding president, the late Kenneth Kaunda, who had ruled the country as a one-party state for more than two decades.

Hichilema narrowly lost two previous elections to Lungu

in 2015 and 2016. His support grew in each of those polls and in 2016 he lost by just 100,000 votes.

Hichilema and Lungu met later Monday, a sign of the start of a smooth transition. In pictures posted on Lungu's Twitter page, both men smiled as they showed their parties' political hand symbols. Also in the photos were Jakaya Kikwete, the former president of Tanzania who was the head of the Commonwealth's observer mission, and Ernest Bai Koroma, the former president of Sierra Leone

who was the head of the African Union's observer mission.

Zambians celebrated overnight, with hundreds of Hichilema's frenzied supporters turning his home on the outskirts of the capital, Lusaka, into a party zone.

Hichilema has his work cut out for him, as his supporters are looking to him to increase employment and cut out corruption.

"We will fix this!" was one of his popular campaign slogans.

Zambia recorded economic progress for more than a decade and achieved middle-income status in 2011, but now the country is beset by high inflation, high debt and allegations of corruption.

The COVID-19 pandemic hurt the already stuttering economy even further. Lockdown measures pushed Zambia into its first recession since 1998 and the economy contracted by 1.2%, according to the World Bank.

An easing of the lockdown measures in the latter part of 2020 and the global rise in copper prices resulted in some recovery, although inflation reached a high of 22% in February this year, according to the World Bank. □



In this Jan 12, 2018 file photo, members of Rapid Action Battalion guard an area during an operation in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Associated Press

IDHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) —

A global human rights group urged the United Nations on Monday to lead an independent investigation into the alleged disappearances of government critics and others at the hands of security forces in

Bangladesh, an allegation the country's government has long denied.

New York-based Human Rights Watch listed 86 alleged victims, providing profiles and details of each case.

It said they remain miss-

U.N. urged to probe alleged disappearances in Bangladesh

ing, mainly blaming the Rapid Action Battalion, an elite anti-crime force that is credited by the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with crushing a rise in Islamic militancy in the Muslim-majority nation. This report, based on more than 115 interviews between July 2020 and March 2021 with alleged victims, family members and witnesses, says authorities have consistently refused to investigate enforced disappearances or to hold those responsible accountable.

The group said authorities use disappearances and the threat to carry them out to silence critics, chill-

ing free speech.

"Bangladesh authorities mock victims and routinely obstruct investigations, making clear that the government has no intention of meaningfully addressing enforced disappearances by its security forces," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"As critics of the government live in fear of being forcibly disappeared, and families of the disappeared have little hope of getting justice from the government, U.N. human rights experts should open an investigation into enforced disappearances," Adams said.

Referring to data collect-

ed by Bangladeshi rights groups, Human Rights Watch said nearly 600 people have been forcibly disappeared by security forces since Hasina took office in 2009. While some victims have been released or appeared in court after weeks or months of secret detention, others were killed in what authorities labeled shootouts with police, it said.

"Scores are still missing. Many of the victims were critics of the ruling Awami League government," the report said.

Calls to a spokesperson for the Rapid Action Battalion were not returned immediately. □

Central America migrants disoriented by U.S. expulsion flights

By SONIA PÉREZ D.

EL CEIBO, Guatemala (AP) —

Hundreds of Central American migrants — many families with young children — expelled by the United States on flights deep into southern Mexico have been dropped this week at this remote jungle outpost on the Guatemalan border.

They walk into Guatemala with children in their arms and their few possessions in plastic bags, pause to put the laces back into their shoes, disoriented by their sudden arrival in a third country in 24 hours. In part, that is the point. The new U.S. measure aims to dissuade them from trying to reach the U.S. border again.

In El Ceibo, they find little more than roadside diners, a small, overwhelmed shelter and suffocating 100-degree heat. Many are not from Guatemala. There are Hondurans and Salvadorans. Some start walking south, hitchhiking or looking for a bus if they have money. The next small community is 11 miles (18 kilometers) away and in between is only jungle interrupted by ranchland. Others say they will head north again.

"What we've seen here is the suffering of these people," said Andres Toribio, who runs the Bethlehem Migrant Shelter in El Ceibo. "They don't know where they're being left. They don't know what Peten is like. It is a huge territory. People think they'll be in a city in 20 minutes, but Santa Elena is the closest city and it's 108 miles."

He said since the U.S. started the flights his shelter has been strained by the new arrivals on top of the usual deportations made by Mexican authorities. He estimated he had seen 4,000 migrants expelled from Mexico here in the past eight days.

"We have capacity for 30 people. Yesterday we received 100," he said. "We're talking about those that Mexico's immigration expels and the ones they're sending on the (U.S.) flights every day, some 500 mi-



An aerial view of El Ceibo, Guatemala, Friday, Aug. 13, 2021, where some Central American migrants deported from the U.S. are finding themselves stranded.

grants left here at the border."

Most are women and children, he said. "We know that in these situations women and children are victims of all kinds of abuse in the street." Human traffickers were also there giving the migrants bad information to keep them from seeking help so instead they could sell their services, he said.

When the expelled migrants board their flights in Brownsville, Texas they don't know where they are going. Some think California, others back home. Some said when they got off the Mexican buses, authorities told them buses waited for them in Guatemala to return them to their countries.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas explained Thursday that the new measure aims to make it harder for migrants expelled under pandemic-related restrictions that prohibit them from seeking asylum to return to the U.S. border. Migrants interviewed this week said they were not asked by

U.S. or Mexican authorities if they needed protection.

The U.S. has flown Mexican migrants deep into Mexico before to deter them from trying to enter the U.S. again, but this is the first time it is flying Central Americans to southern Mexican cities like Villahermosa and Tapachula.

The administration is starting the flights at 24 times a month, with hopes of ramping up, according to a U.S. official who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Mexico agreed to support the effort amid strains between the administration and Central American governments and their reluctance to accept more direct deportation flights from the United States.

Maritza Tepata arrived in El Ceibo Wednesday with her two children ages 3 and 8, after starting the day in Brownsville. On Friday, she was working in a diner, washing dishes, scrubbing floors and waiting on customers along with a Nicaraguan migrant. In exchange, she received food

her for not making extortion payments. Tepata, 26, had been trying to reach Los Angeles.

In addition to her children, she had been traveling with her mother, but they were separated by U.S. authorities after crossing the border into Texas. On her flight Wednesday, Tepata said, "I asked how many hours it was from the U.S. to El Salvador, that's when they told me it wasn't going to El Salvador, but to Mexico."

She had paid \$14,000 to a smuggler to cross and now faced a debt she had little hope of repaying without reaching the U.S.

United Nations agencies and human rights organizations expressed concern this week over the new U.S. measures. Without screening migrants for what they were fleeing the governments were potentially putting them at risk.

"They didn't ask me anything," Tepata said. "I left my country because we were extorted, the father of my children didn't help me ... I emigrated to give my children a better future." □

Associated Press

for her family, but otherwise was not paid.

She had fled El Salvador because a gang threatened

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Travellers' Choice 2020

Tuscany Residence Aruba: Aruba's Luxury Residential Resort with unique Water Villas

NOORD — Within walking distance of the finest white beaches and the clear blue ocean, Tuscany Residence Aruba is founded in one of the best and most popular neighborhoods of Aruba, close to the shopping and nightlife of Palm Beach. Tuscany Residence Aruba brings luxury living to a new level and they are very unique in their offerings with the Daimari Water Villas.

Around 180 exclusive properties will be built in all different sizes and prices, suitable for everyone's wishes and among them are 18 luxury Water Villas, all with a private terrace and direct access to the pool. The Daimari Water Villas include 2 and 3 bedrooms with wardrobes, 2 and 3.5 bathrooms, are fully furnished with a fully equipped German kitchen, fully air-conditioned and with wide aluminum sliding door to the covered pool terraces. Balcony and covered terraces are offered on the 2 floors unit and a private parking in front of the unit or your own garage is all yours. 50% of these amazing houses is already sold! There are still 9 residences available, including 2 with a one car garage.

Tuscany Residences now offer a special pre-construction discount, whereby your advantage increases to 9.7%. Pre-construction prices starting at US\$ 450,775 Turn-Key!

Dutch design

This luxury residential resort with various types of homes has many amenities such as swimming pools, restaurant, bar, offices, meeting rooms, gym, wellness and more. The combination of the beautiful Dutch modern international architecture and the Aruban palm trees creates a luxurious Aruban feeling and relaxed atmosphere in this resort. Tuscany Residence Aruba is the perfect choice for couples and families. Bas de Groot, Managing Director of Tuscany Residence Aruba adds, "We differ from traditional building, our design distinguishes itself." At 8 minutes' walk from Palm Beach, designed in a European style with high-quality materials, on property land and with buying possibilities from condos to townhouses to villas, Tuscany Residence is a dream comes true.



We take care of it all

De Groot adds, "Our project is in continuous construction which builds confidence. He continues saying that maintenance, property management, rental program and safety are taken care of. "You can log in from abroad and manage your property for rental or view your administration." The great thing about Tuscany is that it offers everything equal to a resort but you do not need to wait for an elevator to bring you up, worry about parking space or noisy neighbors. "We have got space and different size offerings making this more a community feel rather than a packed condo building." He also emphasizes that the location is one of the best on Aruba as it is quiet and close to Palm Beach.

Reasons to buy

Reasons to consider Aruba property ownership, at Tuscany Residence Aruba

- Excellent price-quality ratio
- Beautiful designs & Quality construction
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- Property land on top-location
- Varies properties in different price range
- Onsite Maintenance Team, Property Management & Rental Program

Are you looking for a safe, quiet, residential area where you will meet a mix of local and foreign owners? Do you feel for a warm community with amenities like wellness, gym, restaurants, pools and this all within a structure where the residence takes care of your property management while you are not here? Can the highest European quality and solid working structure take away your preoccupations while you are home? Than meet us, we are here to convince you with quality!

For an impression of Daimari Water Villas have a look at the website: <https://www.tuscany-residencearuba.com/en/news>. For more information please contact Bas de Groot by phone +297-7332424 or email bas@tuscanyresidencearuba.com. □

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Article by Etnia Nativa

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Etnia Nativa is close to high rise Hotels



“Maishi” into abstract Art

Episode CXVII- 117

NOORD — By including essential elements of our native culture in art without intending it, we arrive at an art contrary to figurative (that is, the representation of identifiable objects through recognizable images) to abstract art, we see how abstraction proposes a new reality by not representing concrete things, but proposing a “pure art” that we can certainly enjoy beyond our reality.

Starting from this concept and using “corn” as a vital element of the work, the ideas and concepts prevail in the works presented while the visible reality becomes figurative.

Using “Maish”- Papiamentu language for corn - in abstract art the results are as surprising as the importance of corn in Native American culture. For from Mexico, corn spread north and south.

When Europeans like Columbus came into contact with people who lived in the Caribbean, North and South America, corn was an important part of the diet of most natives while until



that time, Europeans were unaware of its existence.

If we think that the first Thanksgiving was cel-

ebrated in 1621. While sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie were not on the menu, Indian corn cer-

tainly would have been one a plate.

For Aruba, corn was of vital importance and the most important crop followed by cassava, beans, squashes and peanuts to mention a few. Corn was sacred to the Caquetio and he respected the whole plant as its creator as mother food and revered with the greatest respect. Along with pollen and ceramic buren, ancient Aruba agro-ceramic cultures had left their native mills or Metate's known as “cudie”, testimony to the presence of corn. This abundance of food gave time to master many expressions of the art of ceramics and a huge variety of crafts and techniques.

The cultivation of corn brought an entirely new era and progress to Amerindian societies across the continent. Yes, for those who successfully grew corn, including those found on islands and mountains. All of these Amerindian groups claim that their meat and bones are made from corn, Maish, or Zea mays, the anthology of GMO's. This is how important this wonderful plant is to many native American cultures.□



To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades. Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com or WhatsApp 297 592 2702 to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.

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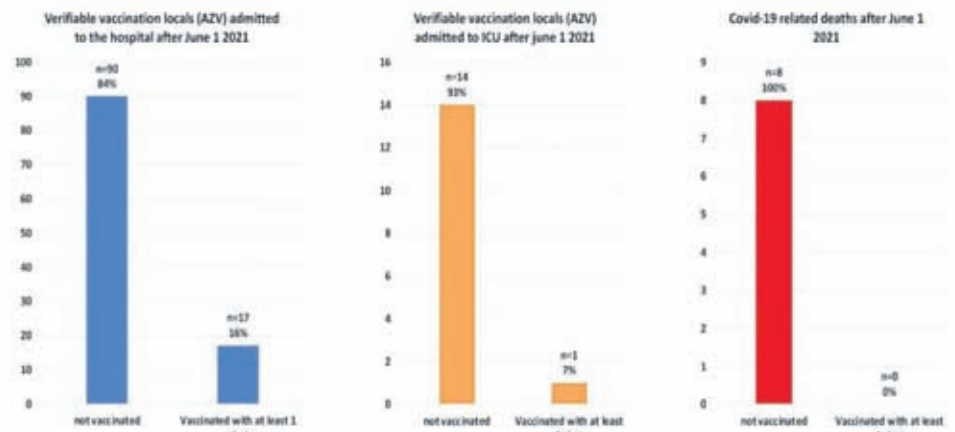
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HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS AND DEATHS



ORANJESTAD – In connection with the National Vaccination Campaign The Department of Public Health (DVG) and the Ministry of Health of Aruba launch the phase of health promotion regarding the fight against COVID-19 on our island.

The goal continues to be herd immunity and vaccination for the different groups in our community to vaccinate. At this moment, an average of 55% of our community (0-100 years) is vaccinated. Therefore, we have to continue to emphasize the importance to vaccinate. If more people in Aruba vaccinate, there will be fewer infections with complications and less probability of hospitalization and death.

According to the actual figures, the most vulnerable age groups because of a low vaccination rate are persons between

12 and 44 years (most active cases) and also people 80 years and older. The appeal is to these age groups, but also to those who are not vaccinated as yet. Please be aware that the Pfizer that Aruba is administering is giving results. According to local data, the majority of persons hospitalized with complications due to COVID-19 are not vaccinated. Hence, it causes more measures in our community with its corresponding consequences, extra medical costs, a negative international image, and considerable social, emotional, and economic pressure. Vaccination is not only an act of solidarity and joint responsibility, where no one can stay behind but also an act of love for you, your family, and your country!

Please do not hesitate anymore: **VACCINATE!**

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

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For today we received an amazing picture and message from **Sa-beela Orbay and Metin Orbay** from Woodbridge, New Jersey who wrote:

"Aruba to me is a peaceful happy island where one can always relax and enjoy meeting friendly arubans and beautiful beaches".

Kimberly Palmer: Lessons in back-to-school shopping for 2021

By **KIMBERLY PALMER** of NerdWallet

For parents, the return to school means a return to spending: NerdWallet recently found that, in spite of the pandemic, about half of parents who plan to back-to-school shop this year expect to spend about the same as they normally would, with more of that spending going toward clothing than in 2020. The pandemic has added new items to shopping lists. More schools are asking students to bring their own water bottles and in some cases larger quantities of items like pencils and crayons as teachers try to restock classrooms, says Charles Field, CEO of TeacherLists, which publishes close to 2 million supply lists provided by schools. It's also harder to find discounts on back-to-school items this year, he says, because of supply-chain challenges. "As retailers run out of stock, they're less likely to do super-low pricing, especially for things produced overseas," he says.

Despite those challenges, there are ways to keep costs under control. We asked parents and educators for their best strategies. **BEFORE SHOPPING, TAKE INVENTORY**

Given that so many students have been in virtual or hybrid school during the pandemic, Nedra McDaniel, mom of two and founder of the blog Adventure Mom, suggests combing through what you currently have, both for school



Back-to-school supplies await shoppers at a store in Marlborough, Mass., in this Saturday, July 11, 2020, file photo.

supplies and clothing. Kids might have outgrown some school clothes but not others, and you want those details before hitting the stores. "Or else you end up buying things you really don't need," McDaniel says. "I've come back and seen we have brand new scissors from last year." She also suggests waiting to buy fall and winter clothes. They're likely to be on sale later in the season — and children might have grown by then anyway. "You don't have to rush out and get everything all at once," she says. Jeans, for example, tend to go on sale in October. Keep a running list of what you need and sizes on your phone so you can take advantage of deals when you find them, McDaniel advises.

STOCK UP WHEN YOU SEE DISCOUNTS

Because of the pandemic's strain on the supply chain, Field says that retailers are running out of standard items kids may need, like binders, backpacks and notebooks. "Shop early this year," he advises, and if you see discounts, don't wait to take advantage of them, because the products might be gone soon or restocked at higher prices. He also noticed back-to-school sales started earlier this year, perhaps as a result of Amazon Prime Day in June.

Alissa Davis, a parent and first grade teacher in Indianapolis, says that she finds deals by making bulk purchases of items like glue sticks, paper and pencils and then slowly using

them up throughout the school year. "You never know when you'll have projects you need to work on at home, so it's handy to have. You can buy in bulk and then spread it out over the next year or two," she says. Davis, who also shares tips on her website, teachermomlifeblog.com, says you don't need to wait until you get the supply lists. She buys when she sees discounts: "You can predict some things he will need or want, so watch the sales," she suggests. Some stores also offer bundled items at a discount, but sometimes they contain extra items you don't need. Similarly, schools sometimes offer a supply bundle for parents to purchase, but you may be able to pay less by shopping sales.

CHECK YOUR LOCAL GROCERY STORE

Davis says she's found some big sales recently at local grocery stores. "They get their back-to-school supplies and then want to make room for fall decor," she says, adding that grocery stores often have loyalty programs that give additional discounts. Some cash-back credit cards also offer grocery stores as a bonus category, which can layer on even more savings.

CONSIDER IN-STORE SHOPPING FOR SINGLE ITEMS

With online shopping, it's easy to compare prices and quickly add items from a school supply list. But that way, Field points out, you might not be able to purchase just one or two glue sticks, for example; you may have to buy a package with several. That approach might work if you're buying for multiple children, but if you want only one glue stick, then you'll likely find better deals when shopping in person.

ASK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT

Some items on the school supply list may not be essential or may not be needed until later in the school year. Davis suggests asking your child's teacher to help prioritize what they really need for the first day and what you can wait to buy. "There are some things I have stashed in a closet or leftovers I could distribute to students. Teachers can help you triage if you're in a jam," she says. □

Hyatt to buy resort manager Apple Leisure for \$2.7 billion

CHICAGO (AP) — Hyatt Hotels will buy resort-management company Apple Leisure Group from two private equity firms for \$2.7 billion.

Apple Leisure manages about 100 resorts with more than 33,000 rooms in 10 countries. The acquisition will double Hyatt's presence in the resort business, the company said.

Travel has surged this year with the arrival of vaccines for COVID-19, but mostly leisure travel. Hyatt is trying to capitalize on that increased mobility.

Hyatt announced the deal with affiliates of private equity firms KKR and KSL Capital Partners on Sunday and said it will close in the fourth quarter.

Apple Leisure's manag-

es Secrets, Dreams and Breathless resorts. It also operates tour packages to Mexico and the Caribbean. Hyatt, based in Chicago, said it will fund the purchase from cash including the sale of \$2 billion in assets and has a \$1.7 billion financing commitment from J.P. Morgan.

Shares of Hyatt Hotels Corp. were flat Monday. □



A Hyatt Place hotel sign marks its location on May 4, 2017 in Carnberry, Pa., Butler County.

Associated Press

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 42 Hold up
1 Quick jab 43 Longings
5 Bea

Arthur series
10 Copying
12 Building wing
13 Clock setting in Illinois

15 Finish
16 Completely
17 Road goo
18 Roosevelt's middle name
20 Mailed
21 Condescend
22 Track figures
23 Garden starters

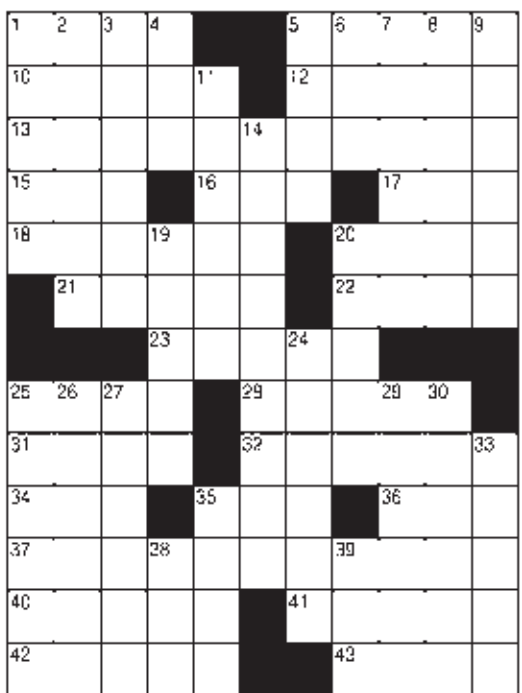
25 Sense
28 Eye drops
31 Writer Rice
32 Certainly
34 Lupino of film
35 "— little teapot ..."
36 Distant
37 Duration of some offers
40 News item
41 City on the Rhône

DOWN
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3 Begin to burn
4 Tolkien tree herder
5 Shopping spot
6 Termite's kin
7 In agreement
8 Insist on
9 Brings to bear



Yesterday's answer

11 Farm 26 Salad
association green
27 Tooth
14 Recharg- layer
ing period 29 Amend
19 Usher's one's
place return
20 "What a 30 Mariners
pity" 33 Garb
24 Reply to 35 Tiny
"Gracias" 38 "— pig's
25 Missed eye!"
the mark 39 Attempt



8-17

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-17

CRYPTOQUOTE

QYTMT CTLCAT YGPT DL
IMTGOZ GDI DL YLCTZ GDI
GZCXMGKXLDZ AXVT UTBLDTZ
INAA GDI G OTGDXDHATZZ
QXAITMDTZZ — KLOOJ ILNHAGZ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: EMBRACE YOUR VULNERABILITIES. ACCEPT THEM. AND FORGIVE YOURSELF. ANGELICA MONROY

Misinformation at public forums vexes local boards, big tech



Members of the County Council joining over video chat participate in the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of a council meeting at the St. Louis County Council Chambers in Clayton, Mo., Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2021.

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) —

There are plenty of places to turn for accurate information about COVID-19. Your physician. Local health departments. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

But not, perhaps, your local government's public comment session.

During a meeting of the St. Louis County Council earlier this month, opponents of a possible mask mandate made so many misleading comments about masks, vaccines and COVID-19 that YouTube removed the video for violating its policies against false claims about the virus.

"I hope no one is making any medical decisions based on what they hear at our public forums," said County Councilwoman Lisa Clancy, who supports mask wearing and said she believes most of her constituents do too. The video was restored, but Clancy's worries about the impact of that misinformation remain. Videos of local government meetings have emerged as the latest vector of COVID-19 misinformation, broadcasting misleading claims about masks and vaccines to millions and creating new challenges for internet platforms trying to balance the potential harm against the need for government openness.

The latest video to go viral features a local physician who made several misleading claims about CO-

VID-19 while addressing the Mount Vernon Community School Corporation in Fortville, Indiana, on Aug. 6. In his 6-minute remarks, Dr. Dan Stock tells the board that masks don't work, vaccines don't prevent infection, and state and federal health officials don't follow the science.

The video has amassed tens of millions of online views, and prompted the Indiana State Department of Health to push back. Stock did not return multiple messages seeking comment.

"Here comes a doctor in suspenders who goes in front of the school board and basically says what some people are thinking: the masks are B.S., vaccines don't work and the CDC is lying — it can be very com-

elling to laypeople," said Dr. Zubin Damania, a California physician who received so many messages about the Indiana clip that he created his own video debunking Stock's claims. Damania hosts a popular online medical show under the name ZDoggMD. His video debunking Stock's comments has been viewed more than 400,000 times so far. He said that while there are legitimate questions about the effectiveness of mask requirements for children, Stock's broad criticism of masks and vaccines went too far. YouTube removed several similar videos of local government meetings in North Carolina, Missouri, Kansas and Washington state. In Bellingham, Washington, officials responded by temporarily suspending public comment sessions.

The false claims in those videos were made during the portion of the meeting devoted to public comment. Local officials have no control over what is said at these forums, and say that's part of the point.

In Kansas, YouTube pulled video of the May school board meeting in the 27,000-student Shawnee Mission district in which parents and a state lawmaker called for the district to remove its mask mandate, citing "medical misinformation." □



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Nicole Kidman leads 'Nine Perfect Strangers' on quite a trip

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tune in to catch "Nine Perfect Strangers" and you'll find drama and suspense. But underneath the hood you might also see some heady stuff, says star Nicole Kidman.

"It kind of delves into some of the biggest existentialist questions," she says. "What is reality? What place can you choose to exist in? Can we alter that? Is there another reality that we can access that maybe is a more desired reality?"

The Hulu limited series that starts Wednesday is definitely ambitious, centering on nine troubled people attending a remote Northern California wellness retreat. Kidman plays Masha, the spa's mysterious guru who has an unusual treatment method involving psychedelics.

The strangers include an unhappy romance writer, a former football star, a bored couple, a simmering-with-anger divorcee, a mysterious gay man and three members of a family grieving the loss of a fourth.



This image released by Hulu shows Nicole Kidman in a scene from the series "Nine Perfect Strangers," premiering Aug. 18 on Hulu.

Associated Press

Their 10-day retreat is told over eight episodes — like an Agatha Christie-style parlor mystery mashed with an adult "The Breakfast Club."

The series is adapted by David E. Kelley and John Henry Butterworth from Liane Moriarty's 2018 novel of the same name. The

show's cast is impressive, with Melissa McCarthy, Bobby Cannavale, Regina Hall, Samara Weaving and Michael Shannon in the ensemble.

"I loved that there were so many characters in it that I felt were so truly three-dimensional," says McCarthy, who plays the novelist.

"They were complicated, and people are messy. And I thought that's how real people are. I don't know any perfect people. I wouldn't know how to play someone perfect."

Some of the issues the series deals with are addiction, the warping influence of social media, emotional

suppression, imposter syndrome and the complicated nuances of mourning. The nine visitors — as well as the spa staff, including Masha — are hurting in some way.

"What would you do to take away the pain? How far would you go?" asks Kidman. "Those questions are really interesting to me, particularly when they're put in an entertaining format."

Cannavale, who plays the former football star, read the script after having just finished Michael Pollan's 2018 book "How to Change Your Mind," which explores the therapeutic potential of psychedelics. The actor jumped at the chance to show another way to treat depression.

"We've been treating people the same way for years. And we've been kind of ignoring this alternative way of treating it," he says. "Maybe people who have never heard of this go, 'Is that real?' And they'll do a little dive on their phone and go, 'Oh, my God, it is real.'"

Selma Blair says she's in remission from multiple sclerosis



Selma Blair attends the 26th Annual Race to Erase MS Gala on, May 10, 2019, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Associated Press

By **BETH HARRIS**

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Selma Blair says she's in remission from multiple sclerosis as a result of undergoing a stem cell transplant.

The 49-year-old actor, best known for such movies as "Cruel Intentions," "Legally Blonde" and "Hellboy," was diagnosed with the disease

in 2018.

"My prognosis is great. I'm in remission," Blair told a Television Critics Association panel on Monday.

She underwent hematopoietic stem-cell transplantation which uses stem cells derived from bone marrow, peripheral blood or umbilical cord blood.

"It took about a year after

stem cell for the inflammation and lesions to really go down, so I was reluctant to talk about it because I felt this need to be more healed," she said. "I don't have any new lesions forming."

According to the Mayo Clinic, multiple sclerosis is an autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks the protective myelin sheath that covers nerve fibers. It can cause vision loss, pain, fatigue and impaired coordination. Its cause is unknown.

"There's still maintenance, treatment and glitches, and wonderful things," said Blair, who at times spoke in a halting voice on Zoom.

"Cognitively, I'm very changed and that's been the harder part," she added.

The actor reveals her fight with MS in "Introducing, Selma Blair," an intimate documentary directed by

Rachel Fleit. It debuts Oct. 15 in theaters and begins streaming Oct. 21 on Discovery+.

"Selma was ready to tell this story in all of its honesty and rawness and truth," Fleit said. "She had a few medical emergencies during filming. When she was like, 'Yes, show it all,' I was like, 'This is extraordinary.'"

Last week, actor Christina Applegate, who is the same age as Blair, revealed her own MS diagnosis.

Blair said she had been experiencing symptoms for years before she was officially diagnosed.

"I've been carrying around some sort of chronic illness, either building up or had for a long time, so it wasn't a surprise to me," she said. "Just the name was a surprise."

Blair is a single mother to her 10-year-old son, Arthur, whom she credits as the source of her strength. Her

mother, Molly Ann Cooke, died in May 2020 at age 82. Blair was unable to visit her in her home state of Michigan because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"I really do feel now, with this pandemic, we've all gotten a kind of diagnosis that's incurable. It's called living right now," she said. "Everyone has really realized our mortality. It taught me a lot more patience and understanding."

At times, Blair said, she wishes she could go home to Michigan and recover quietly. But she also relishes her ability to raise awareness and provide encouragement to others.

"I never really liked life, I do now. Strange, huh?" she said. "I was so scared in life, so to suddenly start to find an identity and a safety in me, and figure out boundaries and time management and energy, I'm having the time of my life."

U.S. forward Carli Lloyd retiring after decorated career

By **ANNE M. PETERSON**
AP Sports Writer

U.S. forward Carli Lloyd is retiring after a decorated career that included a pair of World Cup titles and two Olympic gold medals, as well as a bronze medal at the Tokyo Games.

The two-time FIFA World Player of the Year known for her dramatic hat-trick in the 2015 World Cup final will play four as-yet unannounced friendly matches this fall with the U.S., and finish out the season with her club team, Gotham FC. She hinted for more than a year that she was nearing the end of her career and made it official Monday.

"Through all the goals, the trophies, the medals and the championships won, what I am most proud of is that I've been able to stay unapologetically me," said Lloyd, whose international career has spanned some 16 years. "My journey has been hard, but I can honestly say I've stayed true to myself, to my teammates, my coaches, the media and the fans throughout my entire career and that is what I am most proud



United States' Carli Lloyd celebrates scoring her side's 4th goal against Australia in the women's bronze medal soccer match at the 2020 Summer Olympics, Thursday, Aug. 5, 2021, in Kashima, Japan.

of. Everyone sees the moments of glory, but I have cherished the work behind the scenes and the adversity that I've had to overcome to get to those glorious moments."

The 39-year-old Lloyd scored a pair of goals in the United States' 4-3 victory

over Australia in the bronze medal game in Japan earlier this month. She became the first American to score in four different Olympics, and her 10 total goals in the event set a new record among U.S. players.

She ranks second on the national team's all-time

list with 312 appearances, and fourth with 128 goals. Lloyd is probably best known for her three goals, all in the space of 16 minutes, to lead the United States to a 5-2 victory over Japan in the 2015 World Cup final.

Her third goal in that match

was a blistering strike from midfield.

At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Lloyd scored in overtime in a 1-0 victory over Brazil in the final. Four years later, she scored both goals in the gold-medal match against Japan at Wembley Stadium, becoming the only player to score winning goals in consecutive Olympic finals.

"Carli Lloyd is a true legend," U.S. coach Vlatko Andonovski said. "Her career was unique, and her success on the field is something all current and future National Team players should aspire to achieve. The way she approached her everyday training and career as a professional is truly impressive and I've been honored to coach her."

A New Jersey native, Lloyd has played professionally for some 12 years, spanning time in the now-defunct Women's Professional Soccer league and in the National Women's Soccer League. She also had a brief stint with Manchester United in the Women's Super League. □

Associated Press

Udonis Haslem signs for 19th season with Miami Heat

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

MIAMI (AP) — Udonis Haslem is officially back with the Miami Heat.

Haslem signed another contract — the 10th of his career — with the Heat on Sunday, assuring that he will return for a 19th season with Miami. It is a one-year deal worth about \$2.8 million.

The 41-year-old would become only the fifth player to spend an entire career spanning at least 19 years with one franchise. Dirk Nowitzki spent all 21 of his NBA seasons with Dallas, Kobe Bryant spent 20 with the Los Angeles Lakers, Tim Duncan spent 19 with San Antonio and John Stockton spent 19 with Utah.

Haslem has a unique role for the Heat. He barely plays, with just five appearances in the last two seasons — just one last season.

But Heat coach Erik Spoelstra considers him essential for several reasons, including the example he sets in practice for other players and how much the Miami native values the role of being the captain of his hometown team.

"Udonis Haslem has agreed to come back and play the game he loves so much," Heat President Pat Riley said in a release announcing the signing. "What he loves more than that is to be on the court teaching and competing against the world's best. UD is a legacy player ... ONE PLAYER, ONE CITY, ONE TEAM. Thank you, UD, for coming back to lead again in your city, your organization and your team."

Haslem was, by far, the oldest player to get into a game last season, nearly 2-1/2 years older than Anderson Varejao. He is cur-

rently the 11th-oldest player to appear in a game in NBA history, and would move to seventh — passing Charles Jones, John Stockton, Herb Williams and Bob Cousy — if he gets into a game anytime after Nov. 8. That would leave only Nat Hickey, Kevin Willis, Robert Parish, Vince Carter, Dikembe Mutombo and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar ahead of Haslem on the NBA's oldest-player list.

Haslem's lone appearance last season was memorable. He scored four points, grabbed a rebound, drew a charge, was whistled for two technical fouls and got ejected against Philadelphia on May 13 — all in a span of 2 minutes, 40 seconds.

"If this is the last one, I finished it the only way Udonis Haslem could — with an ejection," Haslem said that night.



In this March 1, 2018, file photo, Miami Heat forward Udonis Haslem chats before the start of an NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Lakers, in Miami.

Associated Press

Haslem is one of only two players — Dwyane Wade being the other — to appear on all three of Miami's NBA championship teams. Haslem is the only player to be with the Heat for all

six of their Eastern Conference championship runs. He leads the franchise's all-time list in rebounds, is second in games and minutes played and seventh in scoring. □

Chasing Tide: Alabama is No. 1 in preseason AP Top 25 again

By **RALPH D. RUSSO**

AP College Football Writer

Another college football season will start with everyone chasing the Tide.

Alabama is No. 1 in The Associated Press Top 25 preseason poll for fourth time in the past six seasons.

Coming off its sixth national championship under Nick Saban, the Crimson Tide enters the season loaded with potential replacements for the record-breakers and NFL draft picks who have moved on, including Heisman Trophy winner DeVonta Smith.

Alabama received 47 of 63 first-place votes from the panel of sports writers and broadcasters in the poll presented by Regions Bank. Oklahoma is No. 2, just ahead of No. 3 Clemson (each received six first-place votes).

Ohio State, which lost to the Tide in last season's championship game, is No. 4 after receiving a first-place vote. Georgia received three first-place votes and rounds out the top five.

The 2020 Buckeyes were emblematic of a bizarre season played through the pandemic, suiting up for only eight games after the Big Ten didn't kickoff until late October. The season was riddled with postponements, cancellations, and players and coaches missing games across the country because of COVID-19. There was little non-conference play and none among Power Five conference teams.

Amid all the chaos and frustration was a familiar ending: The season came to a close with Alabama on top.

Last year's Tide staked a claim as the greatest team of the Saban dynasty. Alabama went 13-0, facing 11 Southeastern Conference teams and playoff show-



Alabama head coach Nick Saban leaves the field after their win against Ohio State in an NCAA College Football Playoff national championship game in Miami Gardens, Fla., in this Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021, file photo.

Associated Press

downs with Notre Dame and Ohio State.

The most powerful offense in the country lost Smith, quarterback Mac Jones and running back Najee Harris, all first-round NFL draft picks this year. The next wave of blue-chippers stepping into bigger roles includes running back Brian Robinson, receiver John Metchie and quarterback Bryce Young, a former five-star recruit from California. Since the AP started the preseason poll in 1950, only 11 teams that started No. 1 also ended the season as

No. 1. Alabama was the last to do it, in 2017, the middle season of three straight in which the Crimson Tide took the preseason top spot. Alabama finished second in 2016 and '18.

No program faces higher expectations than Alabama going into any season: The Crimson Tide is the only team in the country to start each of the last 13 seasons ranked in the top five. And no program has been better at meeting those expectations: Along with the six national titles, the Tide has three more top-four fin-

ishes over the previous 12 years and has never ended a season ranked lower than 10th.

POLL POINTS

— Alabama is now tied with Ohio State for the second-most preseason No. 1 rankings with eight. Oklahoma has the most with 10.

— Only two teams have gone wire-to-wire as the No. 1 team in the country during a season. Southern California was the last in 2004, with Heisman Trophy winner Matt Leinart. The first was undefeated Florida State in 1999, possibly the best team of the Bobby Bowden era. Bowden died earlier this month at 91.

— No. 8 Cincinnati of the American Athletic Conference is the first team from outside the Power Five leagues to be ranked in the preseason top 10 since Louisville started ninth in 2012.

That was the Cardinals' final season as a member of the AAC before joining the Atlantic Coast Conference.

The defending AAC champion Bearcats have the best preseason ranking for a non-Power Five or BCS conference team since Boise State was No. 5 to begin 2011. The Broncos out of the Mountain West finished that season No. 8.

RARITIES AND FIRSTS

— Sun Belt rivals No. 22 Coastal Carolina and No. 23 Louisiana-Lafayette are ranked in the preseason poll for the first time. It's the first time the conference has had any teams ranked in the preseason.

— No. 7 Iowa State is ranked in the preseason for the third straight season after having only one previous appearance in the preseason poll (1978). The Cyclones had never been ranked better than 20th to begin a season. They also have never been ranked higher at any point than the No. 8 they reached last year on the way to finishing ninth.

— No. 10 North Carolina has its best preseason ranking since being No. 7 in 1997 during coach Mack Brown's first stint with the Tar Heels.

— No. 17 Indiana is ranked in the preseason poll for the first time since 1968. The Hoosiers finished last season at No. 12, the second-best final ranking in program history. Indiana has never started and finished a season ranked.

CONFERENCE CALL

No. 6 Texas A&M starts with its best preseason ranking since 1995 when the Aggies were No. 3. Coach Jimbo Fisher's team also gives the SEC three teams in the top six, joining Alabama and Georgia.

Breakdown by conference: **SEC — 5 (Nos. 1, 5, 6, 13, 16).**

Big Ten — 5 (Nos. 4, 12, 17, 18, 19).

Pac-12 — 5 (Nos. 11, 15, 20, 24, 25).

ACC — 3 (Nos. 3, 10, 14).

Big 12 — 3 (No. 2, 7, 21).

Sun Belt — 2 (Nos. 22, 23).

American — 1 (No. 8).

Independent — 1 (No. 9). □



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